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FREDRIC JAMESON

La Cousine Bette and Allegorical Realism

. . . faced with such tangible demonstration of the way in which individual destinies interweave and are slowly, through the process of their interaction, transformed into the collective substance itself before our very eyes, we are not unwilling to limit ourselves for the time to a realistic mode of thinking about life. For the realistic always excludes the symbolic, the interpretive: we can't see the surface of life and see through it simultaneously.

"Metacommentary"

BALZAC came to the form of his last novels —social spectacles that sprawled out and strained plot to its limits—as the result of what look like external circumstances: public taste was changing, in Dumas and Eugène Sue he faced new and strenuous competition and was obliged to fight them on their own ground, with their own weapons: the serial, the melodramatic panorama, the 1001 Nights of modern civilization, with their hosts of characters and their extreme mobility from one end of the social spectrum to the other.[1] It is significant that with only a few exceptions, these new works find their place exclusively in the section devoted to Paris, in the *Scènes de la vie parisienne*: the other categories, those of family life or of provincial, military, political stories, are too specialized; it is as if only the idea of the great modern city were vast enough to house such wide-ranging novels as the *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*. Equally symptomatic is the absence from the 1845 plan of the *Comédie humaine* of the two great final panoramas, *La Cousine Bette* and *Le Cousin Pons*. It is not enough to plead fresh inspiration on Balzac's part: we know the way he worked, how from the long list of already announced and unwritten stories he chose the one that would best fill the length contracted for at a given moment by his various publishers.[2] It is therefore as though something in the very idea of these two works answered some new formal need in Balzac's imagination, promised a formal satisfaction that the older projects, in their own ways, could no longer provide.

The originality of the plan of the *Comédie humaine* lay not only in its ambition to present a total picture of a society, but also in the manner in which social interrelationship was conceived: the links between the stories, which is to say between the characters, and between different moments of the life of a single character as well, are felt as an *absence*, as the blank spaces between the works. Taken as a whole, Balzac no longer presents quite the unequivocal picture of the classic omniscient narrator that he may give in any individual novel: indeed, his system is an ingenious attempt to reconcile two contradictory philosophical impulses. For each section of the *Comédie humaine*, each individual story or novel, remains relatively faithful to an individual experience, to the truth of the isolated monad; while the overall system aims at transcending solipsism, transcending the limits of the individual existence, in a way that still keeps faith with it. For the overall system posits the interrelationship of society as a certainty that we can, however, never see face to face: there are parts of Rastignac's life, parts of de Marsay's, there are hosts of interrelationships between the various characters, coincidences, meetings, passions, that exist but that never are and never will be present to our consciousness. The isolation of the monad is therefore overcome in a negative way; or rather it is neutralized by the imperative to lift the mind to the suprapersonal level of the social organism itself—imperative that remains a dead letter yet that never ceases to reassert its claims over us. In this Balzac is somehow truer to individual experience, in which we never see anything but our own world, but in which we are absolutely convinced that there is an outer surface, and coexistence with a host of other private worlds, than is the system of a Zola, in which the author claims to know everything, in which he is able to fill in all the blank spaces at will, and sees nothing wrong with this facility; or the system of a Proust, who strains the individual point of view, the individual monad, to outrageous lengths to introduce into it

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a knowledge of the outside, of the not-I, of the rest of society (putting Marcel in a position to narrate the story of Swann, for instance). It is worth noting at the same time the tremendous restraint that such a scheme involves on the part of Balzac: he must never try to say everything all at once, the way Stendhal will, the way Proust will; he must work at each part, knowing that it is only a part, and no doubt this inner requirement of the form is related to his own psychology and to the extraordinary discipline of his personal life.

Now, however, under pressure from his competitors, Balzac bursts the limits of his system. Henceforth each part, each individual section, struggles to rivalize with the whole, aims at becoming a *Comédie humaine* in miniature. Hence the peculiar claims of interpretation on these works: the classificatory scheme of the *Comédie humaine*, the various subject-groupings, had previously served as a principle of selection in the reader's mind, had allowed him to place each of these often extremely complicated works within a cyclical and indeed allegorical system in which the "youth" of the stories of private life signifies love, the "middle age" of the provinces interest and the passion for acquisition, and the "old age" of the Parisian material finally vice.[3] But the category of Parisian life is a profoundly ambiguous one: it cuts across the other units, many of which are also set in Paris. As a classification it rests on a different basis from the others, covertly introduces a whole new set of presuppositions. This shift in emphasis is all the more striking when we consider that as a theme, as an anecdote, *La Cousine Bette* is far more closely related to the pictures of family life in the *Scènes de la vie privée* than it is to the phantasmagorial images of Paris in the *Histoire des treize* (early), or the *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* (late). The panoramic view of the city itself (from hovels in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine to the offices of the war ministry and the town houses of the Faubourg Saint-Germain), the hints of various kinds of underground networks and conspiracies (from the dark organization of Vautrin to the white one of Madame de la Chanterie and her charities) are not enough to qualify the work as a purely Parisian adventure, and it is at this point that the problem of interpretation declares itself.

Yet perhaps the ambiguity just described offers a starting point: the classification of *La Cousine Bette* implies that for Balzac the reality of the novel lies not so much in the eternal drama of the couple (*Physiologie du mariage*) as in the dangers to the modern, contemporary Parisian family, dangers inherent in the new city life of the times. A host of interpolated observations and sermons (*tartines*) shows that Balzac thought of his novel rather naïvely as an object lesson: a warning against the kept mistress as the scourge of the legitimate family, a demonstration of the supreme responsibility of the wife, who ought to know how to be both wife and mistress in one, of the perfidy of servants as well and the envy of the hostile outside world and of the family's own "parents pauvres." For such a point of view, therefore, the modern family would be the unifying theme of the novel, and Madame Hulot, as representative in some sense of the destinies and continuity of the family, would be the center of the work.

There is a good deal to be said for this reading: no doubt a part of our discomfort with the objective social novel as a form stems from our inability to think of group destiny any longer, in a world in which the older kinds of groups—nation, family, class, party—no longer have any vitality for us, in which only the destiny of the isolated individual is comprehensible. The family plays a significant role in the thinking of Balzac and in his vision of the world: he had always been obsessed by the importance of primogeniture as a way of preserving the wealth and influence of the great noble families: indeed, it is the single fixed principle from which all the rest of his political doctrine may be deduced. And no doubt in his own childhood he knew the reality of the large family unit more concretely than a Stendhal or a Flaubert. Now, with the pregnancy of Madame Hanska, political conviction meets personal daydream, and for a time Balzac again feels the values of the family personally and concretely: they preside over the writing of *La Cousine Bette*.[4]

And no doubt also Madame Hulot serves in some sense as the framework of the novel, if such a thing can be said about one of its characters. For it begins with her simultaneous discovery of her husband's infidelities and of the family's perilous financial situation: these are continuing facts, yet somehow Balzac feels Madame Hulot's realization of them to be a new beginning in itself. In the same way, after all the multiple crises and climaxes of the plot, the novelist does not feel his drama to be

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a complete thing until Madame Hulot dies of shock, until, that is, she finally gives up hope, finally realizes that her husband is incorrigible. Her consciousness is therefore privileged in some way that remains to be determined; on the other hand her part in the action itself is certainly limited. And if she is to be seen as the representative of "virtue" in the work, the anticipation of symmetry is immediately thwarted by the presence, not of one, but of two forms of vice, in the persons of Hulot and Bette.

We must therefore return to the work itself, allowing Balzac to comment on his own plot organization. He does so a third of the way through the book, at a lull in the action, a moment that presents the illusion of a happy ending, culminating as it does in the ritual outcome of all comedy, the wedding scene. Indeed, in this case it is by way of being a double wedding, a plot and subplot in which both older and younger generations are represented: Hortense marrying the sculptor Wenceslas Steinbock, whom in his moment of artistic success she had stolen away from under the jealous and secretive protection of her cousin Bette; and her father, Baron Hulot, inaugurating on the same day a newly furnished apartment with Valérie Marneffe, whose conquest takes some of the sting out of the rejection by his previous mistress. Adeline, Madame Hulot, is doubly pleased; for her daughter, apparently unmarriageable for financial reasons, has found a husband, and her husband has recovered his good humor, seems able to reestablish the situation of the family. It is after a tableau like this, a momentary and illusory *still*, that Balzac comments on the rhythm of his novel: "Ici se termine en quelque sorte l'introduction de cette histoire. Ce récit est au drame qui le complète, ce que sont les prémisses à une proposition, ce qu'est toute exposition à toute tragédie classique."[5]

No doubt the theatrical terminology is deceptive; the well-made plot in the novel had always implicitly derived from its model in the theater, and had been haunted by the ideal of the theatrical unities. Yet there are some noteworthy inconsistencies. Most of Balzac's longer works have what he describes as an exposition, and the technique of Balzacian exposition is only too well known: the pause on the introduction of a new character, the long prose passage that goes back in time, chronicles the background and history of the newcomer, the endless stoppings and startings with which the reader of Balzac is only too familiar, and through which we must suffer patiently until all the actors have been adequately described and presented; everything is in its place, and the action can really get under way. And there are of course such long expository passages in this hundred-and-fifty-page opening section, which we may henceforth refer to as the prologue in contrast to the main body of the novel. Yet in this case they serve to prepare, not the novel itself, but the preparation of the novel: they are no longer exposition, but rather the exposition of an exposition. For a dialectical transformation has taken place in which quantity passes over into quality: the tremendous expansion of what in earlier Balzac would have been simple exposition has the result of turning the latter into scene, into drama, in its own right, with its own consequent need for its own expository passages. We will see later that this is not merely an external detail, but has profound consequences for the work as a whole and for its meaning.

Obviously the prologue does prepare the main body of the action in some way; but an interpretation that wishes to be self-justifying as it goes along must not be content merely to show the causation that leads from one event to another: it must lay bare the very category of causality that presides over the formation of the plot in question, it must show the abstract principle of selection, the model in terms of which the author sees human events. The prologue ended, we said, on a note of satisfaction, of desire gratified; and it is this that suggests the terms in which our analysis should be framed. What survives the prologue into the main body of the work, that which is in some way responsible for the rapid movement of catastrophe there, which the prologue can be said to have created and accounted for, is a frustration: the rage of Bette at seeing her protégé stolen away from her. (The frustration of Crevel forms a parallel, though less important, line of force.) In the main part of the novel this passion gives itself once more an object, turns to hatred and the desire for vengeance, and provides the motive power for the plot. Satisfaction, frustration: to this analysis, which sees as the principle of human action desire, we are authorized by Balzac himself, who characterizes the movement of the prologue in the following way:

Le lendemain, ces trois existences si diversement et si

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réellement misérables, celles d'une mère au désespoir, celle du ménage Marneffe et celle du pauvre exilé, devaient toutes être affectées par la passion naïve d'Hortense et par le singulier dénouement que le baron allait trouver à sa passion malheureuse pour Josépha.[6]

It is as though the baron and his daughter were two manifestations of a single desire pursuing its object through them in their different modes: Hortense roused by vague daydreams about Bette's "amoureux" to an imperious daydream of possession; the baron, struck by a *coup de foudre* on seeing Valérie Marneffe for the first time at the door of Bette's apartment house. Thus already our interpretation has found its principle, one immanent to the work: the plot is organized by, and human action finds its explanation in, desire for an object, or what Balzac in the terminology of the period liked to call "volonté."

Indeed, this concept may be said to constitute, not so much a psychological insight or presupposition, not so much a vision of human nature, as a formal convention that underlies Balzac's production. Thus it is a formal convention in Joyce that thought is verbal, a formal convention in Henry James that human beings are subtly aware of and sensitive to the most minute articulations of each other's reactions: such conventions function as regulatory concepts that preselect the artist's material for him and permit him to work with a relative homogeneity of surface elaboration. So the novelistic creation of Balzac rests in general on the premise that human existence is at all times motivated by *appetency*, that is, by a clear desire that always poses a precise object before itself. The proper cross-references are not psychology or psychoanalysis, but that vague welling dissatisfaction characteristic of desire in the novels of Flaubert; or the metaphysical value with which desire is invested by the surrealists: two wholly different formal conventions. Ultimately such a compositional premise is measured by what it excludes: in this case, all those vague, passive, dreaming, contemplative moments of human existence in which the individual does not really know what he wants, or indeed, wants nothing: for Balzac such moments are as though they never existed. Unfit material for the work of art, they are banished to some alternate universe of possibility, and the individual consciousness in Balzac is at all moments impelled by the desire to have something: a woman, a certain kind of house or situation; and when the appetency in its upper reaches ceases to be so particularized, as in the more general longing for fame or power, it never ceases to be a quantitative matter: money is in that sense supremely emblematic of it. Only we would be tempted to reverse the normal view of novelistic creation, and claim that money is fascinating to Balzac precisely *because* it so perfectly fulfills this preexisting category of desire, rather than the other way round. This is to say that the universe of Balzac, although difficult for its characters, is never *problematical*.[7] Frequently they fail to reach the objects of their desire, and then they retreat into its dialectical opposite, into a mortification of the will, into solitude, or the convent ("aux cœurs blessés, l'ombre et le silence"), but they never at any moment question the nature of desire itself, they are never led to accuse the acquisitive process, or to conceive a satisfaction of a different type than that which attaches to worldly objects and aims. If we insist on this as a convention rather than a theme or idea in Balzac, we do so in order to forestall any judgment as to the truth or falsity of this psychology. Every psychological system, every vision of human life no matter how subtle and complicated, remains an essence imposed on the infinite richness of existence: a model that in its simplification permits us to see certain aspects of existence strikingly, while at the same time necessarily obscuring others. The psychology of Balzac is such a model, and its value for us varies with our own needs in a given sociological situation. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, when the public stifled in a universe of merchandise, there was a kind of liberation in models and systems that insisted on a nonacquisitive human nature, on a psychology beyond material desire. Now, however, at a time when advertising and opinion-management have blurred the very division between the self and its objects, in which a service economy has removed so many people from a productive relationship to material things, the lesson of clear desire may once more be a salutary one, the source of a new and demystified, more solid relationship to the outside world.

Our method of plot analysis was based on the following presupposition: the joints of the plot are emblematic of the meaning of the work, the type of causality that presides over the movement of the plot is somehow at one with the profound sub-

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stance and meaning of the novel itself, it is through precise examination of that causality that one arrives at interpretation. It becomes clear, when we move from the prologue of *La Cousine Bette* to the main body of the novel, that the desires of that opening section, now satisfied, no longer provide the motive power of the action. (No doubt the sexual insatiability of the baron remains a constant, in the sense that there would be no story without it; but it is the ground of the action rather than its cause: the permanent condition upon which other forces play, which they exploit to their own ends.)

Yet the frustration of Bette, her desire for vengeance, is only the starting point of the events of the main plot: Crevel also takes his revenge on the baron by sharing Valérie without his knowing it. The cadaverous Marneffe brings Hulot closer to dishonor by insisting on an extravagant and unjustified promotion from him. Valérie lures Wenceslas away from his wife, and that minor talent, which only Bette's discipline was capable of developing, is utterly corrupted in the new atmosphere of self-indulgence. Lulled into security by the illusion that Valérie's unborn child is his own, the baron is arrested by the *police de mœurs* in an early morning raid that puts him completely in Marneffe's power. And while he reluctantly allows himself to be blackmailed into the disgraceful promotion, his Algerian scheme collapses, his representative (Mme. Hulot's uncle) commits suicide, and the baron himself is forced to resign his post ignominiously and to disappear. The subsequent reversal of fortune, the counterattack of the family on Valérie and Crevel, the horrible deaths visited on the latter, will be examined later on. It is enough to note that even this second happy ending, in which the baron is restored to his once more prosperous family in his old age, is itself illusory: in his dotage Hulot falls passionately in love with a scullery maid, Madame Hulot dies of shock, and somewhere in Normandy the baron crowns his destiny by marrying the last avatar of his desire.

If we have lost track of Bette herself in the above description, it is because Balzac does so also, distracted from her as from certain other characters (Wenceslas, for instance) by the onrushing momentum of his plot, depriving us among other things of the spectacular death scene that should by rights have been hers. This can be accounted for, it seems to me, by the notion that Bette yields up some of her motive power to subordinates, delegates it out to other characters who take her place, so that she herself ceases to be the central agent of the family's downfall. If the characteristically Balzacian plot is a duel between two wills, this gradual complication, in which little by little mediators interpose themselves between the two principal enemies, is also profoundly characteristic: thus, after the pact of alliance between Bette and Valérie, it is the latter who assumes the former's hatred and desire for vengeance in her own person, just as she assumes Bette's passion for Wenceslas in a strange kind of transferal that permits it this time to be consummated in the flesh itself. Valérie in turn projects her evil intent out onto lesser ministers, Crevel and Marneffe among others; and it is in this way that the host of destructive forces playing upon the Hulot family may be led back to a common source, a common origin, may all be said to be the manifestations of a single desire, and a single will.

It will be objected that the main cause of the baron's downfall, the Algerian catastrophe, really has nothing to do with these purely personal passions and motivations: it is a social and historical phenomenon in its own right, and Balzac never reduces such objective historical events to the level of the symbolic, the purely subjective. And it is true that nowadays we have become sensitive to details that for a reader of twenty or thirty years ago might have passed unnoticed: in the present period, dominated by wars of national liberation all over the world, the visitor to the Proust museum in Illiers, for example, is struck by the fatefulness of certain details, certain absences that the earlier art-for-art's-sake criticism of Proust did not judge worthy of bringing to our attention: notably the Algerian trophies with which the museum is filled, the fact of the suppression from the final work of that whole Algerian and colonial dimension that was so important in the actual life of Proust (suppression symbolized for us by the empty place left in the final work by Octave, the husband of Tante Léonie, who made his fortune in Algeria). In the same way, we cannot help being struck, in *La Cousine Bette*, by what must be one of the first literary presentations of the colonial situation itself: speculators following the army to its colonial outpost in order to make a fortune on supplies, as intermediaries between the local sheiks and the

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government. Yet the aim of Balzac is not a direct portrayal of this phenomenon, as it might be for a naturalistic or documentary novelist. Rather he uses the external historical fact to dramatize what is for him the most privileged phenomenon of historicity, namely, the life in time of the individual consciousness. The emphasis is less on the actual situation in Algeria than on Hulot's mistaken assessment of it: the baron, used to Napoleonic energy and autocratic methods, incapable of imagining himself subject to outside investigation, is the very prototype of the mind marked by the past, lagging behind a changing historical reality, unable to see the new facts of life around him, namely, that the military has been replaced by a new civil administration since the great days of the Empire.

But this is not the whole story: side by side with this unequivocal presentation of the pure historical fact are details of another kind, traces of an attempt by Balzac to draw this fact into fateful relationship with other realities, in short the presence of what may be called, after Freud's terminology of dream analysis, *overdetermination* of the event. This is evident not only in the fact that the baron dreams up his Algerian idea in the beginning in order to finance his new mistress Valérie, but also in the added detail of Valérie's insistence on a large public wedding for the baron's daughter in order that she herself may be shown off. Thus Balzac underlines Valérie's responsibility at the very outset of the adventure. In the same way, the baron's disgrace is sharpened by the episode of the promotion that is simultaneous with it, and that outrages Hulot's superior even before the other news has reached him. And when Valérie almost gratuitously, out of the sheer disinterested love of malice, prevents Crevel from giving Madame Hulot the two-hundred-thousand francs that might have saved her uncle's life, it seems clear that Balzac's imagination is working overtime to make a single fact serve two functions at once, to double the principal historical reality of the fact with a secondary, more shadowy one, in which even this ultimate misfortune may come in the reader's mind to be attributed to the hostility of Valérie and everything she represents. We will return to the analysis of this mechanism shortly.

For the moment we may summarize our findings by saying that the attention to motive power in the elaboration of the plot reveals a strange symmetry between the two parts of the novel, between the prologue and the main action, which is no longer that of classical intrigue, but already tending toward something with a more symbolic dimension: for we have seen how in the prologue all the events were generated by the love passion, by a positive impulse sexual in its nature (in the twin passions of the baron and his daughter). In the main section of the novel, however, the motive power is negative, that of hatred and the lust for vengeance (in Bette, Valérie, Crevel, and Marneffe). And in that section of the book, even when the tide turns against the negative characters, the action remains profoundly negative, in the vengeance wreaked on them by the infamous Madame Nourrisson.

II

The perception of a work of art is dependent on the foregrounding of key details, a process that may either be deliberate or unconscious on the part of the writer and that we may translate into the relatively more psychological terminology of *excess*. For it is this that is felt as a will to stylization, this also that marks the presence of fundamental obsessions, or of style as a kind of repetition compulsion, this that causes images to undergo a purely formal investment with significance from the frequency and insistence with which the mind lingers on them. Yet these are for the most part poetic structures, and the telltale excesses of narration are relocated, not so much in language or in objects, but in action and motivation, in the categories of the event rather than of the substance. What must strike any reader of Balzac sooner or later, for instance, what becomes particularly noticeable to the reader of *La Cousine Bette*, is the degree to which the women characters are seen as malevolent and hostile, as forces of destruction. In this, of course, they resemble the great financial villains, the pirates of large and small business, the Du Tillets and Cérizets, even the Gobsecks, with one notable difference: that in the conventional psychology of the world of Balzac, these "tigers" of finance are adequately motivated: money suffices to explain their ruthless indifference. For sheer absence of motive in their ill will, for sheer gratuitousness, the destructive women characters are much closer to the enigmatic figures of the police, to emanations of Fouché such as Corentin, although even here it is worth noticing that Balzac takes some pains to

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motivate Corentin's vengefulness.[8] Somehow neither money nor revenge is adequate to explain the behavior of these "belles dames sans merci," these devouring mates of the Balzacian universe, who find some positive satisfaction in destroying their benefactors' persons after they have exhausted their resources. Valérie Marneffe describes the central symbol with gusto:

> Faites Dalila coupant les cheveux à l'Hercule juif! . . . Il s'agit d'exprimer la puissance de la femme. Samson n'est rien, là. C'est le cadavre de la force. Dalila, c'est la passion qui ruine tout . . . voilà comment je comprends la composition. Samson s'est reveillé sans cheveux, comme beaucoup de dandies à faux toupets. Le héros est là sur le bord du lit, vous n'avez donc qu'à en figurer la base, cachée par les linges, par des draperies. Il est là comme Marius sur les ruines de Carthage, les bras croisés, la tête rasée, Napoléon à Saint-Hélène, quoi! Dalila est à genoux, à peu près comme la *Madeleine* de Canova. Quand une fille a ruiné son homme, elle l'adore. Selon moi, la Juive a eu peur de Samson, terrible, puissant, mais elle a dû aimer Samson devenu petit garçon. Donc, Dalila déplore sa faute, elle voudrait rendre à son amant ses cheveux, elle n'ose pas le regarder, et elle le regarde en souriant, car elle aperçoit son pardon dans la faiblesse de Samson. Ce groupe, et celui de la farouche Judith, seraient la femme expliquée. La Vertu coupe la tête, le Vice ne vous coupe que les cheveux. Prenez garde à vos toupets, messieurs![9]

No doubt it will be said that such a passage, as interesting as it is psychologically, does not necessarily point to the kind of literary deformation or distortion in which we are interested: the theme of woman revenging herself on man can very easily be the direct subject of a work of art, as for example in D. H. Lawrence. But the point here is that this theme represents an *overdetermination* on Balzac's part, and this is why it has for us the value of a clue or a key to the secrets of the work. These women are mercenary in the very scheme of things, but it is as though Balzac took advantage of that initial fault to impute far graver wickedness to them that he could not rationally justify. In this he is like a man carrying on two arguments at once: and so sure of persuading you of his first, solidly documented point that he takes advantage of the situation to win you over to a second conviction that does not really logically follow from it: all the resources of his art summoned up to conceal the logical jump, to paper over the contradiction with a realistic surface. This is all the more striking when, turning to the virtuous women of the book, we realize that Valérie is right about them too, and that, without greatly forcing it on our attention, Balzac has taken pains to make them also responsible for the moral deterioration of their husbands: Hortense because she pampers and spoils a Wenceslas who really needs severe discipline; Madame Hulot because she does not understand that being a wife is a métier, and that she should know or learn how to be both wife and mistress to her husband.

At this point inevitably a psychoanalytic explanation suggests itself: we remember the feeling Balzac had all his life, not just that his mother was cold and indifferent to him, but, in precisely the projective exaggeration we have been describing above, that she positively hated him.[10] It is not difficult to deduce from this his love of older women, of mother figures; one might even make a convincing case for seeing in this early privation the source of the psychic comfort Balzac found in acquisition, in the possession and description of bric-a-brac.

But this theory offers itself as a causal hypothesis, based on a number of external facts; whereas the interpretation we have been developing must stand as a phenomenological description of a complex of feelings immanent to the work itself. Besides the overdetermination of the women characters, the gratuitousness of their motivation, there is something in the very sequence of the figures themselves that suggests that Balzac is satisfying two psychic aims at once, is using the same characters to tell a realistic social story and to act out some deeper personal myth. We have already indicated that in the economy of the plot, Valérie serves as a kind of *emanation* of Bette. If, setting aside for the moment the whole question of sides and opposing forces, we remember the figure of Madame Nourrisson who sets the dénouement in motion, how is it possible not to glimpse an ancient mythological configuration in the three figures? How is it possible not to recognize the three stages of woman's destiny, the three manifestations of the triple goddess: Artemis, Hera, Hecate, virgin, wife, matron? Except that here the trinity appears in negative form, virgin turned to harlot, wife to old maid, matron to poisonous hag. Yet it seems to me that this configuration is not so important as confirmation of some preestablished notion of a collective mythology or a racial un-

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conscious, as it is in demonstrating how in Balzac's imagination disparate characters come together as separate manifestations of a single united force; and in order to understand what that force is we must turn to its very fountainhead, to Bette herself.

She is both a psychology and a destiny; she has her history at the same time that she incarnates a force. As a character, as an individual case history, Bette represents the mentality of the peasantry dislocated by the new commercial environment of the city and of beginning capitalism. She has the single-minded quality of primitive peoples, the peasant's hoarding instinct; she is subject to blind panics when faced with historical situations beyond her power to comprehend.[11] But what is really unique in her psychology results from the action on this first set of what are basically class characteristics by others of a different category altogether, namely by the psychology of the old maid, by all the forces released by sublimation and distorted by repression, phenomena of which Balzac is keenly aware.[12] Bette chooses her virginity, she rejects all the suitors found for her, she avoids a physical relationship with Wenceslas himself; the suggestions of lesbianism, in particular in her relations with Valérie, should not be seen as a cause but rather as an accompanying enrichment of the basic phenomenon. For its source seems to lie rather in her envy of her cousin, Madame Hulot; in her own person, ugly, badly dressed, poor, unfertile, she stands as a stubborn negation of this Other, hatred of whom has marked her destiny. And as within concentric rings, behind the conscious motivations of the present, behind the apparent attachment for Wenceslas, behind the apparent rage at Hortense, there always persists the older prehistoric motive, the envy of the latter's mother that seems to be at the very center of her being itself.

Yet there comes a point when Bette ceases to exist as an individual psychology, as a character, and becomes, or finds, her destiny, finds a late flourishing, an almost biological happiness, in this identification with an impersonal force:

> Lisbeth, entrée dans l'existence qui lui était propre, y déployait toutes ses facultés, elle régnait à la manière des jésuites, en puissance occulte. Aussi la régénérescence de sa personne était-elle complète. Sa figure resplendissait. Lisbeth rêvait d'être Mme. la maréchale Hulot.[13]

But the fatefulness of this concluding flourish is not enough to disguise the characteristic Balzacian overdetermination at work: the new and final desire does not precede Bette's transformation, it follows it. It is more a reward for her ultimate hatred than a cause of it: the old maid finally dreaming of marriage, the poor relative conceiving of wealth and position, the self-macerating consciousness allowing itself at last the luxury of a desire.

At this point in the novel Bette becomes what is so familiar to readers of Balzac's other works, a kind of allegorical figure, a maniacal or possessed caricature, the kind of unpsychological and therefore to our taste somehow unrealistic, melodramatic representation that we recognize as being like that of old Goriot ("le Christ de la paternité") as well as of so many other characteristic Balzacian figures. Yet something has changed in the later work, and it is formally related to the tremendous expansion of the exposition, to the prologue, which we discussed in the first part of this essay. The earlier figures are presented to us as destinies already fixed; only the long expository chronicles give us any indication of how the obsession in question was formed, and they do so in a different mode, not as scene but rather as factual knowledge. Here, in *La Cousine Bette*, however, the exposition had become precisely a drama in its own right. No doubt the motive for this expansion was practical enough in origin: with his keen sensitivity to motivation, Balzac wished to avoid in the story of Bette's vengeance the cryptic and gratuitous, demonic quality that plays around Iago, for whom several motives are suggested by Shakespeare, none of them convincing, and all somehow mutually exclusive. Yet in this desire to motivate Bette adequately, Balzac broke the limits of his earlier caricatural mode of seeing characters as destinies, and entered on a newer and richer, more historical, psychology.

Now at last, however, Bette is at one with the force she incarnates, and nowhere is Balzac more modern than in his description of this black force, the force of destruction:

> On hait de plus en plus, comme on aime tous les jours davantage, quand on aime. L'amour et la haine sont des sentiments qui s'alimentent par eux-mêmes; mais, des deux, la haine a la vie la plus longue. L'amour a pour bornes des forces limitées, il tient ses pouvoirs de

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la vie et de la prodigalité; la haine ressemble à la mort, à l'avarice, elle est en quelque sorte une abstraction active, au-dessus des êtres et des choses.[14]

Hatred against desire! Death against life! Now, it seems to me, we are in a position to interpret the two-part symmetry of the novel demonstrated in the first part of this essay, and to give a name to the impersonal forces that seem to confront each other beneath the realistic surface of the work, which little by little organizes itself into the struggle between the life and death instincts themselves, between what Freud called Eros and Thanatos.

Both forces are immortal: it is this, it seems to me, that permits us to understand the intervention of Madame Nourrisson more clearly. She is Nemesis and retribution no doubt; but it would be a mistake to think that the episode derives from some moral feeling that evil must be punished: on the contrary, the very source of the punishment is itself highly ambiguous (Vautrin as both criminal and policeman, the police as representative both of order and of absolute autocracy). But this ambiguity is resolved if we understand Madame Nourrisson's vengeance as representing the turning back of the death wish upon itself, the self-immolation of the destructive impulse. For the Thanatos instinct has two modes of expression: in one it turns itself against the outside world, seeks to satisfy itself in aggression and destruction. Yet in this it fails, for the outside object is never ultimately satisfying: think of those hallucinatory pages of the Marquis de Sade in which the chemist Almani, standing upon the slopes of Mount Etna, expresses his longing to destroy all life itself, as a part of Nature to revenge himself on Nature as a whole, to answer the hostility of the universe at large with his own implacable malignancy.[15] Thus the death wish reveals its inner contradictions by its own illimitable hunger, at which point it turns back upon the self in autodestruction.

The recoil of the Thanatos upon the self is given in two modes, as befits the division of the feminine principle in several forms: on Valérie an exemplary catastrophe is visited in the rare poison that disfigures her beauty and turns her body to putrefaction. In Bette, on the other hand, this process of autodestruction takes the form of a slow wasting away, a tuberculosis in which it is difficult not to see a kind of psychosomatic illness. For with the loss of Valérie, the ruin of her hopes for position, the failure of her hatred itself as the family's material situation gradually improves again, it is as if the monstrous virginity, the unsatisfied lust for vengeance fed on themselves; and it is tempting to see in the haggard, wasted figure the very emblem of the superego riding the organism to death, preying on the organic life to which it is attached in the hyperdevelopment of its consciousness at the expense of the other faculties.

III

Hulot is, on the other hand, an absence. For where Bette was overdeveloped consciousness, her hatred the pure negativity of consciousness henceforth detached from organic life, a hyperconsciousness like that of an insomniac, Hulot is instinct, desire, the unconscious itself.

In this respect, it is significant that his story should first be presented to us indirectly, through the voice of someone else. For the various modes of narration are to be distinguished from each other according to the distance they operate between the reader's mind and the event itself: letter novel, first-person narration, courtroom exposition, Jamesian third-person, all these "techniques" represent so many ways in which the present intensity of the event is for us weakened, distorted, partially masked out. For even as language is not a plenitude of being, but an absence of being, of physical presence, so the narrative mode of language is to be defined as a particular determinate form of absence. The first-person narration is for example more closed and mysteriously secretive for us than the Jamesian third-person, with its odd swollen nameless pronouns. It is the difference between overhearing and being addressed directly: in the latter, we have to deal with a face looking into our own, speaking directly to us, concealing its deeper intentions; in the former, we glide in beside a face looking out at a landscape at which we also gaze, we see events through another's eyes, without the interference of any personal opposition to this second consciousness.

The mode of narration in which Hulot first appears to us is the anecdote, a form whose potentialities Balzac had often exploited (as for instance in *La Maison Nucingen*): two people onstage, discussing the fortunes of a third who is absent, in this case Crevel revealing to Madame Hulot for the

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first time her husband's infidelities, as well as the grave financial risks he is running. The anecdote has the effect of dramatizing before us, not a person (for the solid three-dimensional people present are only storytellers and witty listeners), but rather a reputation, a name. The storyteller, the listener, know what the hero of the anecdote looks like: for them, the name will always be filled in by this familiarity, by the physiological memory, just as the relative sparseness of a theatrical text is filled in onstage by the very bodies and physical presence of the actors. But for the reader, the hero of the anecdote remains a cipher, the center of a hundred glances and thoughts that we ourselves cannot see, an impossible imperative to visualization, to the kind of idle mental speculation that we find ourselves engaged in in spite of ourselves when we overhear two people discussing some third party we do not personally know.

This formal absence corresponds to a profound reality in the character of Hulot. Later on, we often see him directly present; we see, for example, the vigorous administrator, full of Napoleonic energy, taking steps to assure his own finances, getting loans, making shrewd speculative arrangements; we see the aging beau rouging his cheeks and wearing a wig in ghastly coquetterie; finally we see the broken senile relic of a man in the miserable squalor of his hiding place. But such is the nature of the passion that Hulot as a character incarnates that he is never really at one with any of these external manifestations of himself. The sexual drive is somehow profoundly asocial, it never expresses itself through the social persona of an individual, through what we may call character, which is a category of interpersonal relationships: unlike the drive of the great businessman, of the inventor, of the dandy, of the journalist or the courtier, the sexual obsession does not find its fulfillment in genuine action—the portly dignified figure at work in the spheres of the great administration is not a reality, but merely an agent for a deeper reality: the social mask of the baron is a *prête-nom* for this deeper force acting within him. The same is true of suffering and degradation, of the passive: the broken old man who turns his face away from his family in humiliation and shame is "not responsible" either, which is a way of underlining our awareness that his visible physical and social being in its degradation is a kind of result rather than a punishment, much like the injury of an innocent bystander.

As with Bette, Balzac offers us an ontogeny of this passion: on a psychological level it is of course a classic form of middle-aged crisis, a kind of male equivalent to the menopause, in which the whole anxiety at feeling life slip away is invested in the sexual obsession. But Balzac's description has a social dimension as well, indeed it is very close to the kind of Marxist psychology practiced by Georg Lukács, for instance. For the latter, indeed, the health of the individual psyche varies according to a kind of cyclical economic health of the social organism itself: in periods of expansion and vitality, the historical moment permits genuine action on the part of individuals. In periods of stagnation, contraction, contradiction, the individual suffers also, is thrown back morbidly on himself, knows *spleen* and *ennui*. So the baron is happily married, contentedly monogamous, during the great days of the Empire, which is able satisfactorily to absorb the energies of individuals, to give rise to a vast *carrière ouverte aux talents*. With the Restoration, and the enforced retirement of the Napoleonic cadres, the baron enters on a first period of licentiousness only temporarily interrupted by his return to service, first in the Spanish War, and finally under Louis-Philippe. But this return to serve, as we may recall, takes place under altered circumstances, in which the civil and the parliamentary are in control, and replace the individualism of the Napoleonic period.[16]

In keeping with our point of view, which is *constructivistic*, we may see Balzac's fascination with obsession or mania as a result rather than a cause in itself; as a logical consequence of some deeper formal presupposition rather than as a self-justifying intellectual interest that needs no further explanation. For mania or obsession is the term-limit of the convention of appetency or clear desire described earlier: the ultimate formal possibility consistent with the mechanism of this particular psychological system. The *Comédie humaine* itself as a formal scheme is based on an equivalence in value between all these desires and passions, and between the obsessions and manias that grow out of them: in order for the *Comédie humaine* to exist as a project and an ambition, any given passion must be somehow infinitely interesting to the novelist in its own right. (Thus it is, for example, that the

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representative of the most dehumanizing and terrible passion of all, Gobseck, usurer and miser, is not really a villain at all, but rather a hero of pure thought.) The modern notion of *alienation*, based as it is on a qualitative analysis of the various human activities, on a judgment as to the degree and nature of the personal satisfaction inherent in each, has therefore no equivalent in Balzac's thought. This is to say basically that Balzac cannot distinguish between alienated and nonalienated forms of life, because in his world *all* ambitions are somehow alienated; with his *esprit de sérieux*, his unproblematical acceptance of all ambition and desire at their official face value, there is no longer any principle of judgment or qualitative selection available to him.

Yet in *La Cousine Bette* this psychological system shows signs of breaking down, a breakdown that is closely related to that formal dissolution of the *Comédie humaine* as an order which we described earlier. For here that sexual energy which had previously been portrayed only indirectly, as it was invested in external symbolic objects such as money, furniture, or position, or by displacement, in the form of the various perversions, is for the first time treated directly in its primary manifestation. This first genuinely sexual obsession is therefore not to be understood merely as one more in a long line of Balzacian manias and *idées fixes*, but rather as a dialectical leap, as something qualitatively new, a breaking through of the older alienated forms of desire. Thus the Eros-Thanatos pattern which we have shown at work in *La Cousine Bette*, far from being a symmetry constant throughout Balzac's work as a whole, must be seen as a late and uncharacteristic symptom of this breakthrough: it is, of course, reproduced outside the work as well, in the diptych of *Les Parents pauvres* as a whole, where, juxtaposed against the satyriasis of the first panel, the collecting mania of *Le Cousin Pons* takes on heightened and morbid significance, and the arrival at the close of the latter work of the strangely modern and anonymous cemetery functionaries links the starkest image of death in Balzac with intimations of a new and depersonalized transformation in the economy itself, with the passing of what we might call the Balzac era of French business.

Such a reading of Balzac's development finds confirmation, for the beginning of his career, in Roland Barthes' *S/Z*, which deals with the relationship between artistic production and castration (in the Lacanian sense of this term) in the novella *Sarrasine* (1830). For the renunciation from which the sculptor Sarrasine draws his power to create is already a symbolic castration; and when he meets the male soprano Zambinella, an actual castrate, his fatal love is a self-infatuation as well, a form of narcissistic self-recognition. At the same time this event is reproduced on the level of the form, where the nameless narrator is himself contaminated by the castration about which he has told; his listener, Madame de Rochefide, who was to have been seduced by the telling, gained by the *aphanasis* or desolate asexuality disengaged by the anecdote, repulses him at its conclusion. For Barthes, indeed, the complicated mechanism of the novella serves to articulate the link between the source of classical artistic production (castration) and its commodity nature (the nineteenth-century *récit* as marketable product and object of exchange) on the level of consumption.

Barthes' commentary, which is conceived as a nonstylistic analysis independent of personal history, may, however, serve as unexpected evidence for a diachronic interpretation of Balzac as well: for in the present context we may see *Sarrasine* (and the related stories which cluster around it on the threshold of the composition of the *Comédie humaine* itself), not only as the sign, on the biographical level, of Balzac's own personal renunciation in the face of the immense labor about to be accomplished, but also and above all as that emblematic gesture of repression which drives the specifically instinctual or sexual material underground, causing it to find expression through substitute languages of economic and social motivations of all kinds, and constituting therefore the very inauguratory act of the *Comédie humaine* itself, its source and foundation in richness of detail and multiplicity of possible stories. *La Cousine Bette*, at the other end of that creation, would then be seen as a sign of the exhaustion of such substitute formation and of the return of the repressed, the reemergence of the purely instinctual and the ultimate dissolution, as a consequence, of the narrative form itself.

The presence of Crevel is evidence of Balzac's own awareness of this transformation in his subject matter: for Crevel is not really necessary to the

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basic plot scheme. Quite clearly his primary function is to serve as a contrast with Hulot, to underline a certain symbolic value in the latter's character. It is precisely because they share a pleasure-oriented, sensual way of life that the difference in quality between them can be so clearly underlined. Crevel is the bourgeois, business mentality, money-oriented even in his pleasures: "un rat bonhomme qui dit toujours *oui*, et qui n'en fait qu'à sa tête. Il est vaniteux, il est passionné, mais son argent est froid."[17] In contrast, there is no mistaking the triumphant tone in which the passion of Hulot is evoked:

> Est-ce vrai, vieux, reprit-elle, que tu as tué ton frère et ton oncle, ruiné ta famille, surhypothéqué la maison de tes enfants et mangé la grenouille du gouvernement en Afrique avec la Princesse?
>
> Le Baron inclina tristement la tête.
>
> —Eh bien! j'aime cela! s'écria Josépha qui se leva pleine d'enthousiasme. C'est un *brûlage* général! C'est sardanapale! c'est grand! c'est complet! On est une canaille, mais on a du cœur! Eh bien! j'aime mieux un mange-tout, passionné comme toi pour les femmes, que ces froids banquiers sans âme qu'on dit vertueux et qui ruinent des milliers de familles avec leurs rails qui sont de l'or pour eux et du fer pour les *Gogos*! Toi, tu n'as ruiné que les tiens, tu n'as disposé que de toi! et puis tu as une excuse, et physique et morale . . .
>
> Elle se posa tragiquement et dit:
>
> —C'est Vénus tout entière à sa proie attachée.[18]

The end of the novel provides additional evidence for this point of view. Like all things that last too long, like all human affairs on which the temporal optic is widened and widened, the conclusion of *La Cousine Bette* presents the ultimate spectacle of the dissolution of human life in time, of the impermanence of human projects and values, an almost bodily or biological decay of human fortunes. Yet the tone of the coda to the work is in striking contrast with the dreary twilight of a Flaubertian ending, for example, where the hero sits alone and abandoned in a henceforth vacant world. Here on the contrary Hulot's fate is ignoble but glorious: through his broken, decayed person the life force itself survives the ruin of its opponent, the Thanatos instinct, and prevails, indestructible and eternal. The swift elevation of the camera, the rapidly dwindling temporal perspective of the last paragraph, produce an illusion of legendary indeterminacy, allow you to feel that the baron may outlast the rest of his family, live well on into midcentury in his sordid back-country retirement. And from the point of view of society, which has the last word of the book, he ends as he had begun, as mere allusion, a third-person anecdote, the legendary vehicle of the impersonal and immortal force itself.

IV

The interpretation we have just sketched of *La Cousine Bette* is of course an allegorical one, and perhaps it is not enough to justify an allegorical interpretation by showing how the deeper subject of the novel itself is precisely the coming into being of allegory: realistic characters little by little becoming possessed, turning slowly into pure personifications. For the appearance of allegory is itself symptomatic of a deeper sociological change, a breakdown in the autonomy of individual consciousness: depth psychology and introspection, or the psychology of consciousness, are mutually exclusive. Introspection, as it is embodied in the tradition of the psychological novel, from Benjamin Constant to Henry James and Proust, presupposes that consciousness, the personality, is a stable unit, comprehensible in itself; in other words that the individual life has a certain unity about it, can stand alone as a complete thing, is no longer felt as a mere part that must be seen in the light of the whole to have any meaning. The belief in the autonomy of the individual consciousness corresponds, therefore, to a moment of social development in which for the time individuals are relatively isolated from each other, in which life is felt primarily as a matter of the individual destiny, in which the private seems able to be separated from the public or the social as a mode of being in itself: the psychological novel is, in short, the privileged mode of expression of that period in which the classical bourgeoisie and its values are triumphant, and the decline of these forms is contemporaneous with the decay of middle-class society around the time of the first World War, as well as with the theoretical expression of depth psychology by Freud.

In opposition to introspection, depth psychology is based, not on the study of the individual consciousness as a comprehensible whole in itself, but on its analysis into the component genetic forces:[19]

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for this psychology, life, rather than consciousness, is the predominant category: it focuses, therefore, not on the individual existence or personality, but on the universal, the racial, the collective; and sees the feeling of individuality as a kind of illusion, the realities of life as those of the universal genetic forces themselves.

The works of art that correspond to these two opposed views of life must each be analyzed in its own terms: that they are mutually exclusive may be judged from the example of Proust, whose unmistakably neurotic content is arranged in such a way that it evades psychoanalytic interpretation. For the latter is formally dependent on the case history, that is, on a series of incomplete events, on a broken, yet apparently infinite, succession of episodes: of these, certain are rearranged into cause and symptom, or in more recent terminology into signified and signifier. But in Proust this type of restructuring is impossible, because for him, in a sense, only the present exists: even the act of remembering restores a totality of conscious plenitude: the Proustian event is held up so closely before our reading eyes that we cannot put it in relationship to anything else. These states of pure consciousness are now sewn together in relatively spatial juxtapositions: the older biographical and chronological sequences are discarded and replaced with newer organizational schemes that, like Platonic ideas, hold before us the eternal tea, or the eternal Sunday-morning walk, or the eternal summer; and great quantities of material (the father, for instance) disappear into the darkness like rooms, hallways, sections of houses (to reverse the Proustian figure) the lights of which have suddenly been switched off.

The art form that corresponded to the twentieth-century breakdown of the stable personality, that demanded the interpretation of depth psychology, was the plotless novel. At the other end of the temporal scale, as we recall, lies the novel of Balzac, the objective social novel, which also lacked an individual hero, which also seemed to call out for some different, nonintrospective principle of interpretation: but this time not because it followed the period in which the individual was still felt to be a unity, but because it *preceded* it. In this sense, Balzac, with his social and political conservatism, is a good illustration of what has often been remarked: that the two political extremes are in many ways analogous, since both of them have the same object of criticism, the middle-class universe, whether they criticize it from the point of view of the feudal aristocracy, like Burke, or from that of the proletariat, like Marx. The claims of introspection have no hold on the novel of Balzac because it is preindividualistic: it wishes to record, not the destinies of individuals, but the universal forces that rule the whole social organism. Balzac understands these collective forces, these forces of the genus, as being primarily historical and sociological in character: but, as we have seen, in *La Cousine Bette* his attention to the collective makes him receptive, without being aware of it, to other types of universal forces as well: the mechanism of his novel, as a form designed to pick up reverberations of class, proves in the end to be an adequate machine for registering the instincts as well.

But our story is not quite over: what becomes of Madame Hulot, in this symmetry between the life and death forces that appears to exclude her? Let us, more for the sake of completeness than on doctrinal grounds, pursue our psychoanalytic model through to its logical conclusion. It follows, then, that if Bette is the domineering and destructive superego, and Hulot the omnivorous, irrepressible id, Madame Hulot can only be the ego itself, in structuralist terminology the place of the *subject*, the rational consciousness that is the battleground between these two buffeting forces. Hence the sentimentalism that attaches to her, as in the novels of Dickens: as endangered as she is, and as illusory as are her claims to autonomy, she represents the only pole of human reality to which the civilizing claims, the dreams of the ideal, can attach: hence her profound identification with the family institution as the very support of society itself. Hence also the deformation of which the sentimental is a mark and symptom: the ideal, the vision of a civilized society, is itself contradictory, cannot be visualized without a certain *mauvaise foi* or self-delusion, self-persuasion, on the part of the novelist. It was in this sense that we spoke of Madame Hulot as a framework; for she is in some deeper sense the point of view of the work, the consciousness across which the opposing instinctual forces struggle. And it is perhaps in this sense that Balzac's conservatism is ultimately to be understood as well: as an attempt to create a

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haven of calm, a fixed point, from which the turmoil of the rest of the social and instinctual upheaval might be observed, around which it might be organized into a pattern: as a kind of convention necessary to permit the existence of the work itself. Thus dreams of privilege console the imagination intent on an intolerable reality.

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Notes

[1] See André Maurois, *Prométhée ou la vie de Balzac* (Paris: Hachette, 1965), pp. 409, 490, 493.

[2] Maurois, pp. 389–91.

[3] See Félix Davin, "Introduction aux *Etudes philosophiques*," *Comédie humaine*, éd. de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), XI, 207–09.

[4] The child was however born dead. Donald Adamson, *Genesis of* Le Cousin Pons (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 6–7.

[5] *Comédie humaine*, VI, 264.

[6] *Comédie humaine*, VI, 198.

[7] This is the position of Lucien Goldmann, *Pour une sociologie du roman* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp. 34–35.

[8] In *Les Chouans* by unrequited love, in *Une Ténébreuse Affaire* by a slight to his honor, in *Splendeurs et misères* by the death of Peyrade.

[9] *Comédie humaine*, VI, 335–37.

[10] See in particular the opening of *Le Lys dans la vallée*.

[11] Compare Bette's reaction to the Restoration (p. 161) with her sudden mistrust of Wenceslas (p. 192).

[12] See the long passage on virginity (p. 230).

[13] *Comédie humaine*, VI, 278.

[14] *Comédie humaine*, VI, 278.

[15] *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Cercle du livre précieux, 1967), VII, 45–48.

[16] See Georg Lukács, *Balzac und der französische Realismus* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1953), pp. 92–93.

[17] *Comédie humaine*, VI, 433.

[18] *Comédie humaine*, VI, 432–33.

[19] See Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon, 1955), pp. 253–54 et passim.

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